

The Sun Is Haunted

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The Sun Is Haunted

by [Monyas](#)

Summary

In another universe, Wen Ruohan had a child called Wen Chao, who grew up to be cowardly, petty and basically an idiot.

In this universe, however, Wen Ruohan had a child called Wen Wuxian, who grew up to be courageous, cunning and basically a genius.

-Presenting to you one Wen Ruohan, the proudest and most stressed father of Nightless City.-

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

- Translation into Русский available: [Преследуя солнце](#) by [Den_Allen](#)
- Translation into Русский available: [Солнцу нет покоя](#) by [Kamarien](#)

In another universe, Wen Ruohan had a child called Wen Chao, who grew up to be cowardly, petty and basically an idiot.

One day, that Wen Ruohan took a moment and looked at his sons, really looked at them, and even though he cared for them in his own way he despaired at what he saw. Both were ruthless, which suited him just fine, but neither of them were the brightest minds of their generation nor did they have personalities that compensated for their general lack of useful skills. Suddenly leaving either of them in charge of his empire left a sour taste in his mouth.

He realized then that he trusted his sons to obey but he didn't trust them to lead.

That Wen Ruohan would go ahead and try to conquer and dominate the cultivation world out of sheer self-preservation. With such unreliable sons it was no wonder he was reticent to leave his legacy in their hands.

In this universe, however, Wen Ruohan had a child called Wen Wuxian, who grew up to be courageous, cunning and basically a genius.

This Wen Ruohan, in contrast, would have a promising heir who he could trust to lead the Qishan Wen Sect in his stead.

This Wen Ruohan would still end up very stressed out and on the verge of suffering from qi deviation.

But for altogether very different reasons.

The boy was born under the eternal sun of the Nightless City, he was healthy and strong and he had his mother's red tinted eyes. Wen Ruohan was satisfied, neither happy nor unhappy, what he felt was a quiet sense of accomplishment for having produced an heir that assured the future of the Qishan Wen Sect.

He took some time to organize the best caregivers for his child, the most prestigious teachers for his education and the most loyal guards for his protection. He even assigned Wen Zhuli to him, under strict orders to remain at his son's side no matter the circumstances. Wen Ruohan had enemies in all sects, and certainly even in his own, and he knew that even the most insignificant of insects would take advantage of such an obvious weakness if given half the chance.

When all was said and done, Wen Ruohan looked down at the frail baby held awkwardly in his arms, at the childish frown upon his brows and the defiant glare that was a mirror image of his own. And, in an act of singular impulsiveness, he discarded the names Wen Xu and Wen Chao as unfitting and spontaneously named his firstborn Wen Wuxian.

The name did not feel perfect, as if there was a sound that was out of place or a meaning that had gotten lost in translation.

Wen Ruohan refused to believe the fault lay with his family name.

That would simply be absurd.

Wen Ruohan mostly forgot he had a son for those first few years of the infant's life.

He did his fatherly duties almost automatically, not more and not less than was expected of him. He read updates pertaining his son's academic progress and approved of this or that expense accordingly. He attended his son's name days and gave him gifts that would show the world his son's standing and his family's honor. He looked upon his son's many milestones and accomplishments with quiet approval. There were no issues that required his direct supervision, and so he watched his heir grow up over the years and he was content.

Maybe somewhat more than content.

There was something to be said about parenting Wen Wuxian that was satisfactorily easy, in the sense that Wen Ruohan had been able to continuously lord over other parents the fact that his son was just better, and without resorting to lying or exaggeration no less.

"My son has just started his archery lessons," Some sect leader would say during a banquet, "Today he hit three bullseyes in a row."

And Wen Ruohan, who had never been interested in such inane conversations, found that he felt a novel sense of pride every time he could casually add remarks like, "I've never seen my son hit anything other than a bullseye."

And sit back and watch the other parents shrivel in shame.

He created many uncomfortable silences this way and it was *glorious*.

It was only when Wen Wuxian was already eleven years old that Wen Ruohan felt concerned about anything that was related to his consistently overachieving son.

Early that year, Wen Wuxian had placed first in an archery competition and a swordsmanship tournament. He had achieved top marks in cultivation techniques, sealing and qi manipulation. He had even been praised for his skills in oratory and discourse by many of his teachers. He was, as per the numerous rumors floating around Nightless City, one of the most promising junior cultivators of his generation. Yet still Wen Ruohan had caught the boy looking dissatisfied, unfulfilled, smiling vaguely when receiving congratulations but sighing to himself when no one was looking.

Wen Ruohan had been looking though.

Not actively monitoring but more like distantly aware, merely because his prowess of observation did not allow for him to ignore potentially problematic issues. A son was an investment that could go very poorly if left unsupervised for long and Wen Wuxian had enough potential for greatness that if anything went wrong with his upbringing it'd be an actual waste.

"What is it that you need, Wen Wuxian? Ask and you shall receive." Wen Ruohan simply asked, unused to giving comfort, a steady hand on his son's shoulder, "No expenses shall be spared."

Young Wen Wuxian stared up at him for a long and contemplative moment as if gauging his sincerity. There was the barest hint of hesitation in his fidgeting hands and a defensiveness in his posture that made Wen Ruohan frown. It did not bear to think that he was the one causing his son to feel like he was forbidden to speak his mind. After all, his son was to be the future leader of their people and thus assertiveness should be encouraged.

He crouched in front of Wen Wuxian then, hand squeezing his shoulder in support, "No one shall deny you anything in this life. Others may beg me on their knees but you only need to speak."

His son had a weird look on his face for a split second, as if he had been unable to recognize his own father in that moment, but before Wen Ruohan thought to address what he saw his son finally spoke.

"A flute."

Instantly relieved that his son hadn't requested a giant dog or something equally ridiculous, Wen Ruohan nodded in easy acquiescence. An interest in the arts, be it musical or otherwise, should not be detrimental to the child's education just as long as he did not neglect his martial studies. Wen Ruohan himself was not well versed in music and he didn't think the boy's mother was either and so, though it was a mystery where the sudden interest had originated from, it was not something he was particularly opposed to either.

Wen Ruohan thought to pass his son's request to a retailer on his way out but then Wen Wuxian squinted at him dubiously and continued with all the defiance of someone who knew what he wanted.

"A bamboo flute, a dizi, a C-key qudi specifically, made from the darkest purple bamboo grown in soil soaked in resentful energy. It needs to be a spiritual instrument, made to withstand energy manipulation and possessing a superior range of sound projection. It should be adorned with a dark red tassel and a white jade lotus flower for decoration and qi balance." Wen Wuxian nodded to himself before adding, "It shall be named Chenqing."

Wen Ruohan stared deadpan at his son for one long second.

Ah.

A test.

So, he should look into acquiring the flute himself after all.

It was well worth the effort when Wen Ruohan later caught Wen Wuxian smiling in honest delight as he personally presented his son with a flute made exactly to his specifications. At that moment, in the eyes of an eleven-year-old boy, Wen Ruohan saw more respect than he had ever seen in the many gazes of his numerous advisors and servants. What a difference it

made to be respected without the cloying sensation of fear and distrust seeping into all his interactions.

Yes, it was really well worth the effort.

It was, perhaps, not worth the next sleepless nights during which Wen Ruohan and everyone within the vicinity were assaulted by the tortured howling sounds of an out of tune flute haunting the palace, as if ghouls and ghosts were stalking the halls in woeful lament.

Wen Ruohan's relationship with his wife was not to be called warm by any means but it was also not as cold as to be called resentful. They were just indifferent to one another and, for as long as they had known each other, their mutual indifference made for a comfortable and surprisingly pleasant partnership.

And so, Wen Ruohan sat dutifully next to his wife's imminent deathbed, sharing with her a look of apprehension after they watched their disconsolate son excuse himself from the room with clenched fists and unshed tears in his eyes.

Apparently, their son had inherited none of their indifference.

"I have taught him not to care for other people." His wife said with as much dignity as she was able to project while weakly reclined in bed.

Wen Ruohan took it as the reproach it was meant to be and couldn't help but be defensive, "I taught him to kill when he was five."

"Well, I taught him to love only himself." His wife said primly.

"And I taught him to hate the world." Wen Ruohan added.

They both sighed and shared another look, this one of commiseration.

"I don't think we are very good teachers."

Wen Ruohan couldn't help but agree. Thirteen years of parenting experience and neither he nor his wife knew exactly why their son had grown up to be so generous, compassionate and, dare he say, kind.

Maybe Wen Zhiliu's righteousness and sense of integrity was contagious?

In the following weeks, Wen Ruohan was kept busy organizing his wife's affairs for her and so he had to postpone dealing with his son's distress. Wen Zhiliu had informed him that Wen Wuxian had invaded the house of a branch family that consisted of cultivators who were known to specialize in the healing arts. It was a foolish endeavor, Wen Ruohan had thought, as if he hadn't ransacked the whole goddamn city and many others beside in his search for a cure. The lack of trust stung, and so he decided to let the eventual failure give his son a harsh life lesson, when it turned out that all his efforts to find a cure for his mother's decaying health were futile.

But Wen Wuxian taught him a lesson instead.

In the aftermath, Wen Ruohan found himself violently shaking his son by the shoulders, so furious that he could feel himself lose all reason, his uncontrollable spiritual energy unleashed like a hurricane inside the small bedroom and ripping the walls apart. It felt like going into qi deviation except he had never thought it would feel so utterly helpless.

His wife fared no better. Her dignified composure was shattered and she was left curled onto herself, clutching a hand to her chest as if trying to claw her heart out and biting her lower lip until it was left raw and bleeding. She had been unable to stop sobbing.

Both their voices were so raw from screaming it didn't feel like they were saying coherent words anymore.

A child of barely thirteen, a child with a broken core, Wen Wuxian let himself be shaken and yelled at. He laughed and laughed and there was only triumph in his childish delight.

So much for indifference.

Wen Ruohan swore under his breath.

Someone, somehow, was going to die for this.

Generally speaking, Wen Ruohan was satisfied with his reputation as the most cruel and heartless man out of all sect leaders. He was known as a sadist, as someone who delighted in the methodical annihilation of his enemies, in meting out the slowest and most painful of punishments against those who dare defy him. It was a fair and, most importantly, a truly useful reputation. It was even amusing, Wen Ruohan had thought, how easy it was to terrify people into complacency instead of having to take the time to be reasonable, how interesting it was to break the rules and mold the cultivation world to his desire with but a few well-chosen threats.

It did not seem so amusing now.

Now Wen Ruohan read the latest report on the other sects' views about the Qishan Wen Sect and felt like stabbing someone with the sword he hardly ever used anymore, just to make a point.

Apparently, it was widely believed that Wen Ruohan had killed his own son.

Apparently, it was widely believed that Wen Ruohan had beat his son to death for being unable to keep up with his cultivation.

Apparently, it was widely believed that Wen Ruohan had ordered Wen Zhiliu to rip his son's core apart and, in doing so, condemned him to the slowest of deaths.

This last one had evolved into the most convoluted story about a love triangle between him, his wife, and Wen Zhiliu because the idea of him killing his own son was *apparently* not

tragic enough for the incessant gossip-mongers of society. And people wondered why he stopped attending those useless discussion conferences. The only thing people did during them was talk circles of nonsensical logic until at least one sect's reputation was left in tatters.

Wen Ruohan thought about his heir, who was to inherit the burden of dealing with dreadful politics and bear the aftermath of such scandalous hearsay. His steadfast son who had to seclude himself to take care of his precarious spiritual vitality and whose failing immune system had yet to improve even after so many months. The fact that the outside world had so easily accepted the untimely demise of Wen Wuxian before he was even properly introduced into society bothered Wen Ruohan like nothing else had ever bothered him before.

It was not the kind of situation that he could remedy with threats of bodily harm, at least not completely, but if there was one thing he knew would surely work was fighting rumors with even more rumors.

With that in mind, Wen Ruohan arrived at the halls of the next conference discussion with the flair of a man who knew he hadn't been invited and didn't care. He walked past the cautious and fearful gazes of his many enemies and sat down in the place of honor after staring Jin Guangshan down into ceding to him his misappropriated seat.

"Welcome everyone to this year's discussion." Wen Ruohan began with a smile that he knew looked vaguely sinister, "Now, I've gone ahead and changed the agenda for today's meeting. Let us talk about the future, about the next generation. Let us talk about my most beloved son and heir, since you all like to talk so much about him anyways."

Wen Ruohan had a plan. It was a long-term plan in which he would spend as much time during these useless discussion conferences talking about Wen Wuxian as humanly and inhumanly possible. He'd talk so much about his son people would never think of going against his heir least they were prepared to go against the entire might of the Qishan Wen Sect. He'd talk so much about his son he'll make these useless discussions even more useless than they already were. He'd talk so much about his son he will make the other sect leaders go into qi deviation out of pure jealousy.

Wen Ruohan hoped his son appreciated all his efforts when he was older.

A couple years later saw Wen Wuxian petitioning Wen Ruohan for a formal audience at the sect's main hall.

It made Wen Ruohan frown in apprehension. His son had occasionally been summoned to the great audience hall to receive duties or hunting assignments but never had he gone through the trouble of formally asking to see his father for anything of real importance. Most times, his son tended to stand beside him, learning governance through observation and sometimes providing strategic insight when consulted. It was bizarre to see his son and heir approach the stairs in obeisance, bowing low as was required of polite etiquette and decorum. The mere sight of his son's averted eyes made Wen Ruohan cringe internally.

Let it be over quick then, "My son, speak at ease."

Wen Wuxian exhaled as if to steady himself, saluted formally with all the dignity of a gangly teenager and requested firmly, "I would ask for father's permission for a three month leave of absence and I would humbly beg for Qishan Wen Sect's blessing to occupy a territory outside Qishan's boundaries to call my own. The territory in question is far from Qishan and close enough to Yunmeng that my intentions may cause some political tensions."

Wen Ruohan blinked both at the unnecessary formality and at the strange request, "Yunmeng is insignificant and any complaints they may have are highly negligible. As far as I'm concerned, you can conquer and destroy Yunmeng itself with impunity."

As far as Wen Ruohan was concerned, it was about time his son became interested in war and conflict. The only reason he hadn't urged his son to leave his seclusion and lead his army was the fact that his son's health took precedence over such matters. As expected of his ever-dutiful son to be responsible and take the initiative.

"I understand, father." Wen Wuxian coughed, "I do not believe that destroying Yunmeng will be, uh, necessary at this point in time but I shall take the possibility into consideration."

Wen Ruohan nodded absently, more concerned about his son's protection than the particulars. It was, after all, Wen Wuxian's first outing as conqueror, "Take as many troops as you need. And servants of course. And Wen Zhiliu too, and of course Wen Qing to take care of your condition and any injuries you may sustain."

"Right," There was a split second of hesitation before Wen Wuxian recovered his composure, "I am honored by father's trust."

"Take care not to overextend yourself."

"Of course."

"And stop by your mother's before you go to get *her* approval."

"I understand."

In the weeks that followed, Wen Ruohan would develop unprecedented spikes of anxiety. He hadn't let himself worry too much about Wen Wuxian when his son left Nightless City accompanied with but a small retinue of soldiers and servants. He felt but the tiniest bits of disappointment and apprehension when these same soldiers and servants came back to inform him that his son had apparently gained control over the prosperous but useless city of Yiling without hardly any opposition from adjacent sects. Wen Wuxian had supposedly pacified the neighboring Yunmeng Jiang Sect with a minor monetary compensation accompanied with a map detailing the boundaries of the land he had wanted and had somehow received zero objections in return.

The mild apprehension quickly turned into outright panic when Wen Zhiliu came back alone to kneel before him, defeat painting his body language, to inform him that he had lost Wen Wuxian inside the Burial Mounds. Wen Ruohan had almost instantly killed the man for his

failure, but the debilitating loss caught him just as fast. He ended up slumping on the stairs that lead to a seat of power that never before felt so useless. What use was power now?

Wen Wuxian was lost.

His son was lost.

Gone.

And Wen Ruohan did not remember if he ever told his son how proud of him he was, how proud of him he has always been.

Wen Wuxian came back to Nightless City exactly three months after he left.

By then even the official mourning period was over yet still there were splashes of white adorning Nightless City, for Wen Ruohan's son had been well loved despite the Qishan Wen Sect's general aversion to openly express sentiment.

Wen Wuxian went straight to announce himself to a shaken Wen Ruohan. He walked into the audience hall with his head held high and his back straight. He wore the impeccable garments of an adult cultivator, the blacks as dark as night and the reds flowing like rivers of blood.

"Father."

Wen Wuxian bowed in a mocking parody of formality, his right hand holding Chenqing as if it held the power of a thousand talismans and his left hand posed with unnatural innocence on top of Suibian's hilt. There was a distinct aura of sharp resentful energy wrapped around him so fiercely it looked almost tangible. His eyes shined with repressed malice and a hint of madness. Wen Wuxian looked upon Wen Ruohan defiant and unafraid. There was killing intent in the air and danger in the slightest of movements.

Wen Wuxian had come back bearing the title of Yiling Patriarch and the reputation of being the founder of demonic cultivation.

And Wen Ruohan had never felt so damn proud.

He hurried down the stairs in a daze and, before Wen Wuxian had time to play his flute or unsheathe his sword, Wen Ruohan embraced his one and only son in a tight hug and said, with as much emotion as he had ever felt, "I am *so proud* of you."

Wen Ruohan had been prepared for his son to stab him in the back then, to overthrow him from leadership like Wen Ruohan himself had done to his own father in the past.

Wen Ruohan had been prepared to *let* him.

He had not expected Wen Wuxian's permeating aura of resentful energy to suddenly vanish into thin air. He did not expect his son to return his hug with a hesitancy that spoke volumes, nor did he expect his son's quiet words.

"I'm home."

Wen Ruohan decided not to wage war against the world, at least not in the current generation. Not when he had but one heir to his name, and one he was in no hurry to endanger in the name of useless glory.

He was honestly more concerned with trying to convince his mercurial son to actually inherit his position as Qishan Wen Sect leader rather than becoming the founder of an independent sect in Yiling. Not that Wen Ruohan didn't approve of his excellent ambitions but he just didn't think neither him nor his wife were prepared to survive having another child to inherit the Qishan Wen Sect just yet.

They may need a few decades to recover from the stress of raising their first one.

And so without war in the horizon he mellowed a bit and made nice with the other sects. Even though most sect leaders avoided him like the plague these days after so many years of him torturing them with endless monologuing.

Well, maybe he was not nice. Just nicer.

At his son's insistence, Wen Ruohan even reluctantly sent him to study at the relatively neutral Gusu Lan Sect as his formal introduction into society, but mostly to sate Wen Wuxian's endless curiosity for the unknown and his enthusiasm for what Wen Ruohan only perceived as dreaded social interaction.

It turned out to be the worst possible decision Wen Ruohan had ever made for his son.

"— as expected of one of the Twin Jades of Gusu Lan. His swordsmanship is equal to my own but he makes it appear one hundred times more graceful and effortless. There's an air of elegance to him, even when he is drunk or sleeping or —"

Wen Ruohan stared at his son scandalized.

Wen Wuxian was *in love*.

Oh no.

Maybe it was still not too late to conquer and destroy the world. Maybe he should start with the treacherous Gusu Lan Sect. Maybe he should personally pay a visit to whichever depraved little shit had shamelessly bewitched and seduced his son with their *wiles*.

"— maybe a bit aloof sometimes and a man of few words but I only need but glance at him to understand what he is trying to communicate. We work very well together during hunts and have I mentioned he plays the guqin, which compliments my dizi so perfectly —"

Wen Ruohan watched with unseeing eyes as Wen Wuxian beamed at him with a frankly sunny disposition, expressive hands flying around and positively jumping on the spot out of

restless energy. He looked lively and spirited, positively radiating enthusiasm as his cheeks colored with the rosy hues of youthful love.

In the background, Wen Zhiliu's left eye seemed to have developed a permanent twitch.

"— deep sense of honor and justice and cannot stand wrongdoing or evil, but he has infinite patience and he can stand me, I mean, he tolerated my multiple attempts to befriend him to the point that we even shared a bath together —"

Ah.

So.

Maybe it was time to retire after all.

End Notes

Because Wen Chao was spoiled and Wei Wuxian needed spoiling.

Kudos and comments for every time I spelled Wen Wuxian as Wei Wuxian writing this?
facepalms

Works inspired by this one

[Wen Jingyi](#) by [justizzyhere](#)

[The Sun Is Haunted \[Cold Read\]](#) by [GinevraReads \(GinevraFangirl\)](#).

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